High Cost of Indigenous Cotton

436. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Rs. 80,000 crores Indian Textile Industry is under threat of losing its leading position in exports due to high costs of indigenous cotton in making its production such as yarn, fabrics and garments uncompetitive;

(b) whether import of cotton has been steadily increasing from 4.13 lakhs bale in the past to 22 lakhs bale this year and this is expected to cross 25 lakhs bales next year;

(c) the productivity has also gone down due to lack of modernization of plants and equipments; and

(d) if so, what action is Government taking to prevent the decline of this industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI V. DHANANJAY KUMAR): (a) and (b) To retain competitiveness in the global market, the domestic textile industry can import cotton freely without any restrictions. The import of cotton during last four years is as under:

Year	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01
Quantity (in lakh bales of 170 kg. each)	4.13	7.87	22.01	16.00

Source: Cotton Advisory Board.

(c) and (d) The Government has launched the Technology Mission on Cotton to improve the productivity and quality of cotton and the Technology Upgradation Fund scheme for modernization of the Textiles and Jute industries.